

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A packaging casing, for a sausage casing, which comprises knitted fabric or contains the latter as a strengthening constituent and has at least one seam with a release thread, characterized in that the release thread loses its strength under the influence of a treatment compatible with the packaging contents or as a result of a time lapse so that the packaging case can be opened and removed.

2. (Previously Presented) The packaging casing as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the packaging casing comprises a shape-determining casing net surrounding the actual sausage casing.

3. (Previously Presented) The packaging casing as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the release thread is temperature-sensitive.

4. (Previously Presented) The packaging casing as claimed in claim 3, characterized in that the release thread is thermoplastic.

5. (Previously Presented) The packaging casing as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the loss in strength of the release thread is based on embrittlement.

6. (Previously Presented) The packaging casing as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the loss in strength of the release thread is based on the fact that the latter or an essential constituent is soluble in a treatment medium.

7. (Previously Presented) The packaging casing as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that a plurality of the longitudinal seams with release thread are distributed over the circumference.

8. (Currently Amended) A method for opening a packaging casing, for a sausage casing, in which the packaging casing comprises a knitted fabric or contains the latter as a strengthening constituent and has at least one seam with a release thread, characterized by waiting for the loss in strength of the release thread, which takes place under the influence of a treatment compatible with the packaging contents or a result of a time lapse, and thereafter opening and removing the packaging casing.

9. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 8, characterized in the release thread loses its strength at a release temperature which lies above the

temperature of any treatment of the packaged packaging content and below a temperature at which the packaging contents may be damaged during the period of time required for releasing the release thread, and in that the release thread is heated to the release temperature in order to open the casing.

10. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 9, characterized in that the packaging contents, together with the packaging casing, are subjected to a treatment, as a result of which the release thread is reduced in strength.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Canceled)

13. (Previously Presented) The packaging casing as claimed in claim 2, characterized in that the release thread is temperature-sensitive.

14. (Previously Presented) The packaging casing as claimed in claim 2, characterized in that the loss in strength of the release thread is based on embrittlement.

15. (Previously Presented) The packaging casing as claimed in claim 3, characterized in that the loss in strength of the release thread is based on embrittlement.

16. (Previously Presented) The packaging casing as claimed in claim 2, characterized in that the loss in strength of the release thread is based on the fact that the latter or an essential constituent is soluble in a treatment medium.

17. (Previously Presented) The packaging casing as claimed in claim 2, characterized in that a plurality of the longitudinal seams with release thread are distributed over the circumference.

18. (Previously Presented) The packaging casing as claimed in claim 3, characterized in that a plurality of the longitudinal seams with release thread are distributed over the circumference.

19. (Previously Presented) The packaging casing as claimed in claim 4, characterized in that a plurality of the longitudinal seams with release thread are distributed over the circumference.

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20. (Previously Presented) The packaging casing as claimed in claim 5, characterized in that a plurality of the longitudinal seams with release thread are distributed over the circumference.